

make believe i'm everywhere by lost_in_saudade

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King, The Neverending Story (Movies)

Genre: 80s movies as a plot device, Alternate Universe - Everyone Lives/Nobody Dies, Angst with a Happy Ending, Bisexual Richie Tozier, F/M, Fix-It, Gay Eddie Kaspbrak, Internalized Homophobia, M/M, Mutual Pining, Slow Burn, Temporary Character Death, The Turtle (IT) CAN Help Us, and i mean EVERYONE lives, in this house we love and respect ALL the losers

Language: English

Characters: Adrian Mellon, Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Dean (IT), Don Hagarty, Eddie Kaspbrak, Georgie Denbrough, Mike Hanlon, Patricia Blum Uris, Pennywise (IT), Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris, Victoria Fuller

Relationships: Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Patricia Blum Uris/Stamley Uris

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2019-11-20

Updated: 2019-12-02

Packaged: 2019-12-18 04:47:17

Rating: Mature

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings, Graphic Depictions Of Violence

Chapters: 4

Words: 5,568

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

"The book was clearly quite old with worn, leather binding and gold-trimmed pages. The corners of the cover were embellished with a fanciful gold design but even more catching, however, was the symbol adorning the center. It depicted two snakes, one gold, one silver, intricately woven together to form a sort of reptilian knot. The words, 'The Neverending Story,' were written in all caps below it.

His eyebrows knitted together in confusion. Why did Eddie bring this, of all things? It was buried way too deep in the suitcase to have been brought for some light reading on the flight. Maybe it was important

to him? Like a prized possession or something? With that thought in his head, he had the sudden urge to know just what made the thing so special.

Richie brought it, along with the bottle, over to the bed (Eddie's bed, god, this was Eddie's bed). He took a few more sips of whiskey, let out a preparatory huff and, sitting cross-legged on the (formerly) unwrinkled covers, opened the book to the first page."

(or the it: chapter two fix-it fic/neverending story fusion absolutely nobody asked for)

1. As You Wish

Summary for the Chapter:

“He’s hurt. He’s hurt really bad. We gotta get him out of here.” Richie ripped off his jacket and pressed it to the wound – an attempt to staunch the bleeding. Eddie winced at the pain and, looking into the other man’s teary eyes, thought to himself, *that’s not gonna do any good for me now, is it?”*

Or, Eddie Kaspbrak Gets Off a Good One

Notes for the Chapter:

fic title from "never ending story" by limahl
no knowledge of neverending story is explicitly necessary for the fic but some of the characters may or may not make an appearance. also, this is mostly movie canon w a few references to book canon sprinkled throughout. forgive me if this is garbage lol. comments/kudos are greatly appreciated!

side note: eddie's alt death scene came out yesterday. gays, how we feelin?

see end notes for warnings

Eddie

It took a second before Eddie registered the pain. One would think being speared through the chest by the claw of an interdimensional, shape-shifting spider clown would consist of immediate, debilitating pain but apparently not. He felt the claw go through him; he knew, logically, that he had been stabbed. He felt himself jolted forward by the force of the blow. But before he really felt anything more, he felt the weight of Richie’s expression. Glasses spattered with blood and mouth agape, he looked shocked, horrified, haunted. He thought, for a moment, that he wanted to wipe the lenses clean just to see that lopsided grin Richie got when Eddie was being particularly neurotic.

Only then was he overcome with the agony.

“Richie,” he whined, feeling blood dribble down his chin.

Pennywise raised him in the air, waving his body in front of his friends like a child with a toy he’d stolen from another kid. *Finders keepers, Losers weepers*. It’s taunting laughs echoed in the cistern amongst Bill’s shouts and Beverly’s wails. Despite the pitiful softness of it, he heard Richie the loudest: a quiet, pained voice calling out Eddie’s name.

It tossed him aside and Eddie saw the cave walls whizz by as he rolled into an isolated cavern, landing brutally on his stomach. The gaping wound in his chest burned white-hot, a stark contrast to the cold bed of rock below his immobile form. Meanwhile, a pool of blood grew steadily larger around him.

Strangely enough, as he lay there waiting for his friends – he could already hear their voices coming nearer – he thought of his mom. He thought of her saccharine voice saying, *“oh sweetie, you’re just so delicate; you’re so fragile, baby.”* He thought of how she’d lied to him all those years, how afraid she’d made him feel of everything and everyone, how she’d stripped away his childhood with pills and diagnoses. He thought about her... manipulation (because that’s what it was, wasn’t it?) and couldn’t help the swell of uncharacteristic self-pride despite it. A tidal wave of boldness (*you’re braver than you think*) that seemed to respond, *“look how fragile I am now, ma. Look how delicate and pathetic and weak your son is now. He faced off a demon clown twice on top of two decades of your bullshit and another two of someone else’s. He saved his friends – he saved Richie – and so what if he went down doing it? He went down swinging, which takes more strength than anything you could ever conceive, you manipulative bitch, so fuck you!”*

Eddie was chuckling when the Losers slid down to him, a noise that quickly shifted to grunts of pain as they hoisted him up, propping his body on a rock. Outside, Pennywise raked his claws against the entrance, tearing down chunks of earth with each strike.

“Come out and play, Losers!” It howled. They paid it no mind. Instead, they huddled around Eddie, looking concernedly at the hole

in his chest.

“He’s hurt. He’s hurt really bad. We gotta get him out of here.” Richie ripped off his jacket and pressed it to the wound – an attempt to staunch the bleeding. Eddie winced at the pain and, looking into the other man’s teary eyes, thought to himself, *that’s not gonna do any good for me now, is it?*

“How are we supposed to do that, Richie,” Beverly answered, not unkindly. The sound of Pennywise’s unrelenting – and increasingly successful – efforts at the mouth of the cave continued to resound. And then –.

“I almost killed It. The leper,” he realized aloud, his voice labored as he pushed through the pain of speech, of breath. The Losers all gazed at him, rapt and attentive – save for Ben who had slipped off while Beverly was speaking. Probably checking out the area. *Smart man, that Haystack*, he could almost hear Richie say, *got brains the size of his muscles*. “My hands were on his throat and I could feel him choking. I made him small. He seemed... weak. He seemed... *seems* so weak.” Mike jolted up, eyes wide and full of realization.

“The Shokopiwah. ‘All living things must abide by the laws of the shape they inhabit.’”

“Guys!” Ben called out, returning from around a bend in the cavern. “There’s a passageway through here.”

“The tunnel! Pennywise has to make himself small to get through the entrance of the cavern, right? Okay so if we can get back there, we can force him down to size. We make him small. Small enough so we could kill him.” *Beverly, you brilliant, brilliant woman.*

“I can smell the stink of your fear!” It called.

The thing about being in a group of friends like theirs was that they knew each other. Intimately. Intimately in the sense that they understood each other’s tells, each other’s body language. They were in tune. Always had been. As such, they didn’t need words to come to agreement about the plan. They didn’t need words to know that, while Bill, Bev, and Mike ran ahead, Ben and Richie would each take

one of Eddie's arms to bring him along. Ben, because he was the strongest, and Richie because... because *Richie*. They didn't need words to know that just because Eddie was hurt (or asthmatic or neurotic or *dying*) didn't mean he was any less valuable to their group.

Eddie didn't have the heart to disillusion them. They would know soon enough – he wasn't going anywhere. He thought about whether or not it would disappoint them that he wasn't helping (*please don't be mad Bill, I was just scared*) and resolved that, if so, he had it in him to let them down one last time. No more, no less.

"I need a little rest." The two set him down once again. Ben crouched a few feet away, allowing him and Richie the closest thing to privacy they were going to get.

Everything hurt, overwhelmingly so. His vision was getting darker around the edges. His ears rang like the bells of the Neibolt Street Church – with its gospel music and Jerry Lee Lewis piano-playing. His brain felt like TV static and blood was everywhere and here, all the same, was this beautiful asshole with a heart of gold. Richie. The best man he had ever known. He had forgotten him for a long time, sure, but that didn't shake the validity of the statement. He was annoying, and messy, and the bane of his existence but he loved without conditions, and was loyal to a fault, and dear God he was the love of Eddie's life. Shame be damned.

Richie raked his eyes over Eddie's face, concern and worry causing his eyebrows to knit together. It was an odd expression on him. His face, which was usually so carefree, so gleeful, shouldn't look so panicked. That was Eddie's job.

Because the thing about RichieandEddie (because that's what they were, RichieandEddie, not Richie and Eddie - they never really had the concept of space, did they?) was that they knew each other. Intimately. Intimately in the sense that they knew what made the other tick, what made the other pissed or happy or distracted. They were in sync. Always had been. As such, Eddie knew just what words would make things better, even if just momentarily.

"Hey, Richie. I gotta tell you something."

C'mon. Show me that smile.

“What? What’s up, buddy?”

*Show me that beautiful smile of yours one more time. Just one more time.
Just one more –.*

“I fucked your mom.”

There it is.

Eddie coughed up more blood and, hearing their friends begin to tear into the evil that had taken so much from them, knew Richie would soon have to join them. In the meantime, as he felt himself slip away, the strangest thought came to him. Well, it wasn’t a thought, really, more of a connection.

For some reason, he couldn’t help thinking of the beginning of *The Princess Bride*, when the grandfather had already begun telling the story of the fated lovers. He thought of Buttercup ordering Westley around. He thought of the farmboy’s sole response. But mostly, he thought about the grandfather’s narration.

“...She was amazed to discover that when he was saying ‘as you wish,’ what he meant was, ‘I love you.’”

And wasn’t that just the most beautiful sentiment?

Notes for the Chapter:

chapter warnings: (temporary) character death,
canon-typical language and violence, sonia
kaspbrak's a+ parenting

2. Don't You Forget About Me

Summary for the Chapter:

"Inside the luggage lied everything he expected to find: the world's largest collection of polos, a whole-ass pharmacy, and a small planner nestled into a zipped-up compartment because *of course he has a fucking planner, the little shit*. In fact, there was only one thing he found that even remotely struck him as odd. Buried underneath the polos, and the pharmacy, and the planner was a book."

Or, Richie Tozier Reads a Book

Notes for the Chapter:

i literally cannot stop writing this fic, y'all. chapter three will be up next tuesday so mark your calender!

see end notes for warnings

Richie

Richie made his way back to the Townhouse mindlessly. He felt like he was watching his body from the outside as he showered off the filth from the sewers, as he tugged on dry clothes, as he visited the Kissing Bridge and whittled that 'E' a little deeper. In fact, it wasn't until he finally fell onto the bed of his rented room that it hit him.

Eddie was gone.

It wasn't like the feeling he'd had after Neibolt when Mrs. K hid Eddie away. God, Richie'd missed him, sure, but Eddie had always been a spitfire. As much as he would complain, Richie had lost count of how many times the guy had stuck up for him or snuck out to meet him. None of this bullshit with his mom or Pennywise or even Bill would change that. Not for them.

That summer, the Losers' Club was a fractured mess. If he'd seen any of them in those days, he would've punched Bill (because he'd

punched him first), would've torn into Bev (because she'd backed Bill and that felt like betrayal), would've ignored Mike and Ben (because even though he was pissed, he really didn't have anything to chew into them about). Not Eddie though. Not Stan either. (But Stan was a whole other can of worms. He loved Eddie; he wanted to wake up to his face and fall asleep to the sound of his breathing. Stan was his *brother*.)

It wasn't like the feeling he'd had when Derry's girls finally started noticing the smaller boy. When one or two of them saw past the whole "loser" thing and caught onto his fluffy hair and big brown eyes and take-no-shit attitude instead. Yeah, it sucked, seeing them giggle when Eddie walked by or hearing them ask whether or not he was single. Ultimately, however, all Richie had to do was throw out a "your mom" joke and all Eddie's attention was laser-focused back to him.

It wasn't like the feeling he'd had when he'd left Derry the first time. Even though Bev and Ben and Bill had all lost their addresses or gotten too cool for them or whatever it was, that didn't mean shit about him and Eddie. They were different. But it turns out it had nothing to do with how much they'd cared, how tightly they'd hugged that last day, because it was Pennywise – always fucking Pennywise – and not them.

The feeling was more like a nightmare and he couldn't seem to wake up.

Richie sat up in the bed, suddenly aching for a drink. Alcoholic, preferably. He pulled himself to his feet and padded downstairs to the bar where yet again, no one seemed to be working. He wasn't complaining. It made things easier on his part.

"Hey, Rich," called a gentle voice behind him as he grabbed a bottle of whiskey off the counter. Bev. "Can't sleep?"

Liquor in hand and looking over at her kind face and too-long sweatpants, something twisted and painful and *mean* filled his chest. He glared at her with red-rimmed eyes.

"Surprised to see you out of Ben's room, what with it being your

honeymoon and all. Have you gotten to the main event? Or did he realize the Miss Marsh Special has had a few too many showings? Wouldn't want poor Haystack saddled with reruns," he spat, bitterness painting a cruel sneer on his lips.

"Richie...", she whispered, pain evident in her voice. "I know you're hurting, hun, we all are, but -."

"You don't know shit. Just leave me alone." With that, Richie turned from her. He knew what he'd said was nasty and uncalled for. It wasn't her fault he was alone. It wasn't her fault Eddie was dead. But Richie was miserable and hurting and on the verge of tears. At least if she was mad at him, he wouldn't get in her way.

He climbed back up the steps, fully intending to go back to his room and drink himself to sleep. He intended to let himself forget, even just for a little while, that the love of his life was lying under tons of debris and sewage with a hole in his chest. Instead, Richie found himself at the door to Eddie's room. He took a deep breath and walked in. Evidence of Bowers' attack was clear in the torn shower curtain and the blood droplets like polka dots on the bathroom tile. A set of matching luggage rested beside the bed and a jacket lay folded at the corner of the bedspread. It was all so ordered. So neat. So *Eddie*. Richie couldn't help the sob that escaped his lips.

The TV was on and playing softly – Eddie must've forgotten about it when he was attacked. Richie recognized the scene instantly. It was the ending of *The Breakfast Club*. Claire gently pressed one of her earrings into Bender's hand and, in response, the delinquent placed a soft kiss on her lips. She pulled away, smiling, and drove off. Mouth slightly agape, Bender watched her go and slid the jewelry through his pierced ear.

"Dear Mr. Vernon," Brian's voice began in the background. "We accept the fact that we had to sacrifice a whole Saturday in detention for whatever it was we did wrong. But we think you're crazy to make us write an essay telling you who we think we are. You see us as you want to see us: in the simplest terms with the most convenient definitions. But what we found out is that each one of us is a brain..."

"... and an athlete..."

“... and a basketcase...”

“... a princess...”

“... and a criminal.”

“Does that answer your question? Sincerely yours, The Breakfast Club.”

A part of him wanted to keep everything just the way Eddie had left it down to the bloodied bathroom. But as Simple Minds crooned in the background, Richie realized that a much larger part of him wanted to revel in all that remained of the hypochondriac. He hesitantly reached out for the folded jacket and slowly brought it up to his cheek. The fabric was soft against his skin and the scent of Eddie’s cologne wafted into his nostrils. It smelled like sage and saltwater – beachy, soothing, *clean*. Richie sighed wetly, tears falling onto the jacket without his permission.

Richie slipped the coat over his plain, white t-shirt. It was definitely too small – the sleeves hugged his arms a bit too snugly and the waistline fell a good few inches above the hem of his pants – but he didn’t care. He corked open the whiskey and took a generous swig before moving to the luggage.

Inside it lied everything he expected to find: the world’s largest collection of polos, a whole-ass pharmacy, and a small planner nestled into a zipped-up compartment because *of course he has a fucking planner, the little shit*. In fact, there was only one thing he found that even remotely struck him as odd. Buried underneath the polos, and the pharmacy, and the planner was a book. It was clearly quite old with worn, leather binding and gold-trimmed pages. The corners of the cover were embellished with a fanciful gold design but even more catching, however, was the symbol adorning the center. It depicted two snakes, one gold, one silver, intricately woven together to form a sort of reptilian knot. The words, ‘The Neverending Story,’ were written in all caps below it.

His eyebrows knitted together in confusion. Why did Eddie bring this, of all things? It was buried way too deep in the suitcase to have been brought for some light reading on the flight. Maybe it was important

to him? Like a prized possession or something? With that thought in his head, he had the sudden urge to know just what made the thing so special.

Richie brought it, along with the bottle, over to the bed (*Eddie's bed, god, this was Eddie's bed*). He took a few more sips of whiskey, let out a preparatory huff and, sitting cross-legged on the (formerly) unwrinkled covers, opened the book to the first page.

Notes for the Chapter:

chapter warnings: derogatory comments about female sexuality, grief, alcohol use as a coping mechanism, canon-typical language

3. (Don't) Cross the Streams

Summary for the Chapter:

“I’m afraid I have something to ask of you.”

“No way. Whatever it is, no way. I’m done being a hero. I saved the world, I saved my friends, and, hey, isn’t there any weight to the whole rest in peace thing and -.”

“It isn’t dead.”

Or, Eddie Kaspbrak Isn’t Dead

Notes for the Chapter:

so sorry for the delay - thanksgiving chaos and upcoming finals are not a fun mix. also, sorry the chap is so dialogue heavy, it was unfortunately necessary for explanation reasons oops. to my fellow americans, have a happy thanksgiving, and to everyone else, have a lovely day! chapter four is already in the works so stay tuned!

see end notes for warnings

Eddie

Memory is a funny thing but it’s even funnier in a dream. For some reason, Eddie’s mind decided to go to Ghostbusters, of all things. Specifically, it summoned the scene when the titular group was figuring out how to defeat the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man near the end of the movie. Except Eddie was Stanz and Richie was Venkman and, for some reason, Spengler was a turtle. Even weirder, some of the quotes were wrong.

“I have a radical idea,” said Turtle Spengler. “If the door swings both ways, we could reverse the particle flow through the gate.”

“How?” Richie asked, looking equally ridiculous and charming in the Ghostbuster’s suit.

“We'll cross the streams.”

“You said crossing the streams was bad.”

“Cross the streams...” Eddie echoed thoughtfully.

“You're gonna endanger us, you're gonna endanger the kids.”

“Not necessarily. There's definitely a very slim chance you'll survive.”

What a strange dream...

When Eddie woke, he was half submerged in mud.

He blinked, attempting to clear the blackness dotting his vision, and glanced around at the unfamiliar wasteland. Fog rolled along the swampy earth. The thick, almost black mud slurped around his waist, where he lay with his back propped against a knotted, gnarled tree. Before him seemed to be the only distinct feature of the barren region: a hill of sorts jutting out of the muck. The landmass was covered in moss with more of the strange trees protruding out of its crest.

“The fuck...?” His voice was rough, and his mouth bore the taste of copper. Blood. Why did his mouth taste like blood? And then a flood of memories overtook him: the phonecall, the reunion, the clown, the sewers, *his own fucking death*. Eddie's breath quickened as he scrambled up, peering down at his chest. His shirt was ripped in the middle. The ruined fabric was reduced to a conglomeration of bloodstains and mud splotches (*Eddie you'll get sick, there are microbes and viruses and diseases, oh, yes, sweetie, so many diseases*). And yet, there was no wound. No wound, no bruising, not even a scar. He lifted a hand to his face and found that, despite the still present bandage on his cheek, that cut was miraculously healed as well.

Where was he? What had happened to his injuries? How the fuck was he alive? And *goddammit* he needed his inhaler. The confusion and

uncertainty of the situation were triggering his asthma. He fumbled around in his pockets, searching for the aspirator but – oh.

Oh yeah. He burned the damn thing in Mike's useless ritual.

Eddie gasped for air, clutching at his (unharmd) chest. What an opportune time to have an asthma attack, right in the middle of the fucking Everglades or some shit. A voice in his head reminded him that *no, you're hyperventilating; you don't have asthma, just anxiety.*

(give me that, you little turd)

And then, as if he wasn't already losing his shit, the mountain in front of him began to move.

"Oh my fucking God! Oh my God, what is happening?" Eddie screamed, clambering up the tree he'd formerly been laying against. "Jesus fucking Christ, what is happening? What the fuck is happening!"

"Hello, Edward," said a voice.

From the mountain, the massive, muddied head of an oversized turtle had emerged. The mountain, it seemed, was actually the shell of the colossal beast. The turtle looked at him with its big, blue eyes and what appeared to be a friendly smile pulling on the corners of its wrinkled, beaked mouth. Eddie found himself with a distinct impression of the wisdom that comes with age, of gentle kindness and warmth and respect. It unnerved him beyond belief.

"Holy fuck, that turtle just said my name. Okay, okay, this is fine. Everything's fine. I'm not having a post-resurrection breakdown in front of a talking dinosaur. I'm fine," Eddie panicked.

"Do not fret, dear one. I have been waiting for you for quite some time"

"Don't fret? *Don't fucking fret?* I think, given the circumstances, my fretting is perfectly reasonable!"

"I sincerely apologize for the suffering you and your friends have endured. Truly, I'm sorry. Your concern is not unwarranted but

please relax, I do not mean you any harm.” With the turtle’s words, Eddie felt a surge of peace run through him and he blinked rapidly through the emotional whiplash. Did that turtle just fucking mind-whammy him?

“Who... who are you?” Eddie asked, a little dazed.

“I am Maturin. Welcome to Fantasia, Edward Kaspbrak.”

“Fantasia? Is this like... heaven?” *Because if so, it’s way muddier than I was expecting.*

“Not quite,” Maturin chuckled. “Fantasia is the home of all mankind’s dreams, beliefs, and desires.”

“Why am I here then?”

“As I am sure you are well aware, you have died. When beloved people pass, their friends and family long for their return. Sometimes, their wish is granted.”

“So I’m alive... because people want me to be?” Maturin smiled convivially.

“Precisely.”

“And what are you then? The Gatekeeper?” *Eddie my love, does that make you the Keymaster?* A voice that sounded like Richie’s added.

“Unfortunately not,” Maturin sighed. “I’m afraid I have something to ask of you.”

“No way. Whatever it is, no way. I’m done being a hero. I saved the world, I saved my friends, and, hey, isn’t there any weight to the whole rest in peace thing and -.”

“It isn’t dead.” At that, chills ran down Eddie’s spine. He stilled, face pale.

“Yes, It is. We killed Pennywise. My friends and I, we killed It; I swear we did!”

“Alas. Pennywise, as you call It, is still alive.”

“...How?” Eddie asked shakily. And so Maturin began to explain

“It is from Fantasia. But many, many years ago, It found a way out of our realm and into yours. I know not how. There, in Derry, It was invincible. One cannot kill a nightmare when one is awake, you see?”

“But if It was invincible, how did my friends... How did they overpower It? They did overpower It, didn’t they?”

“They did. In a sense. It was quite the spectacle; you should be very proud. But their actions simply returned It here. To Fantasia. I mean no offense, but while you have saved your world, you have doomed mine.”

“Look, I’m sorry about that but Pennywise is not my problem anymore. Besides, I’m by myself here. I couldn’t do anything about It even if I wanted to.”

“You are never alone, Edward. Remember that. And I must impress upon you that this is as much your problem as it is mine. Think about what will happen to Earth if It manages to escape again?” Eddie sighed. As much as he hated to agree, Maturin had a point. Because isn’t that the reason he and the Losers did what they did? So Pennywise couldn’t come back to torment the world when they were too old to stop It?

(we’ll be seventy years old, asshole)

“You were nearly successful in your first attempt because of your allies,” Maturin continued. “You were theoretically successful the second time because you knew what to expect. If you were more prepared on both accounts...?” Eddie mulled over the turtle’s (frustratingly ambiguous) words for a moment before a thought suddenly struck him.

“What about the other Losers? I can’t do this without them, and they aren’t... you know... dead. How can I get ‘allies’ if they aren’t here?”

“Your assessment is correct. Richard, Beverly, Benjamin, William, and Michael are not here. But Fantasia may have something to offer if

you search hard enough. All the same, if you listen closely, and if you are successful in your task, then perhaps you shall all be reunited.” A swell of hope arose in Eddie. He had another chance? He could see the Losers again – *he could see Richie again?* Well then. Eddie supposed that changed things.

“What exactly is my task, then?”

“I have already told you, Mr. Kaspbrak. Best of luck to you, for all our sakes. And be careful. Pennywise knows you’re here.” With that, Maturin began to retreat into his shell, smiling softly.

“Wait! Where are you going? I have more questions!” Eddie shouted, running up to the turtle’s shell as it sunk back into the muddy water. “Get back out here, you vague piece of shit! I have no clue what I’m doing!” He banged against the mass to no avail, growling in frustration.

“God fucking dammit. I hate my life,” Eddie groaned.

Notes for the Chapter:

chapter warnings: panic attacks, sonia kaspbrak's a + parenting, references to injury/death (but only in recollection), canon-typical language and violence, references to Abrahamic religious beliefs

4. I Know I'm in a Mess

Summary for the Chapter:

“What are you talking about? What did we do?” Ben asked, bending down to his level with those concerned puppy eyes of his.

“The fucking book! The fucking book where Eddie’s alive!

Or, Richie Tozier Needs New Friends (But Not Really)

Notes for the Chapter:

here it is, chapter four! title from 'saved by the bell' by scott gale. comments and kudos are greatly appreciated!

see end notes for warnings

Richie

Richie brought the tome, along with the bottle, over to the bed (*Eddie’s bed, god, this was Eddie’s bed*). He took a few more sips of whiskey, let out a preparatory huff and, sitting cross-legged on the (formerly) unwrinkled covers, opened the book to the first page.

“Memory is a funny thing but it’s even funnier in a dream,” Richie read. *“For some reason, Eddie’s mind decided to go to Ghostbusters, of all things. Specifically, it summoned the scene when the titular group was figuring out how to defeat the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man near the end of the movie. Except Eddie was Stanz and Richie was Venkman and, for some reason, Spengler was a turtle. Even weirder, some of the quotes were wrong.”*

Okay, Richie thought. *That’s weird.* So Eddie just so happens to have a book with both their names in it? He scanned a little farther down the page, reading through book Eddie’s dream, his waking up, the description of his surroundings, and then –.

“...And then a flood of memories overtook him: the phonecall, the reunion, the clown, the sewers, his own fucking death.”

“Shit!” Richie exclaimed and threw the book across the room. It slammed against the wall and tumbled down, landing open-faced on the dingy floor. He ran to the bloody bathroom and emptied the minimal contents of his stomach into the toilet, tears flowing down his face as he heaved uncontrollably.

They must think they're so funny, Richie sneered to himself. A fucking prank? Of Eddie? Right after his death? (Because what else could it be?) Seering rage and stabbing hurt swarmed his chest like locusts. Hurried footsteps resounded outside the room and, as his heaving subsided, Bill, Bev, and Ben burst in. Bill valiantly wielded one of the hotel lamps above his head with the other two flanking his sides. Seeing Richie's state, he exhaled and allowed his weapon to clatter to the floor.

The sight of his friends the trio made Richie weep even harder.

“W-we heard you shouting, Richie, what h-happened?”

“Like you don't know, you fucking assholes! I thought you were my friends! I thought you were his friends!” He cried, clambering backward so his shoulders hit the cool edge of the tub.

“What are you talking ab-b-bout? And why are y-you in -.”

“I'm not in the fucking mood for playing dumb,” Richie responded darkly. “You knew I'd come here. You knew how I felt... how I *feel* about him. You knew and you fucking milked it! Not used to being on this end of a bad joke, gotta say.” Angry tears rolled down his flushed cheeks because how could they – after everything they'd been through – be so insensitive with something so serious? It felt like betrayal. It felt like he had lost not only Stan, not only Eddie, but now his friends too.

“What are you talking about? What did we do?” Ben asked, bending down to his level with those concerned puppy eyes of his.

“The fucking book! The fucking book where Eddie's alive! Bet that

was your writing, wasn't it, *Big Bill*. I didn't get very far – tell me, does he come back only to die all over again? Or maybe he lives and we have our happily ever fucking after so I can be reminded that, hey, hope you're enjoying this because he's gone and you're never gonna get this in the real world! Tell me, Billy, I'm just dying to know –!"

"Richie!" Beverly interrupted. "We would never do something like that. I promise. We miss him too." Richie's fury began to crumble at the sincerity in her words. A part of him – the part of him that was still uncertain of her veracity – raged against it, a seed of doubt attempting to hold the cracked emotion together like duct tape.

"... But... but the book..."

"What book, sweetheart? Where is it?" She asked. He thought about her tone, how honey-sweet and cotton-soft it was, and he felt even guiltier than he already had.

(wouldn't want poor Haystack saddled with reruns)

He pointed in the general direction of the book's location and felt like poison.

Bill walked off, presumably to find the subject of their conversation and the source of the comedian's outburst. Ben and Bev waited cautiously a few feet away from Richie, the former now sitting on the tile with one of his knees pulled up to his chest. Beverly shuffled her feet and looked nervously between Ben and himself. Richie couldn't meet her eyes. She inhaled, steeled herself, opened her mouth to speak and –.

"F-found it!" Bill called, returning to the crowded bathroom with the book in hand. Saved by the Bill. Richie wasn't sure he was emotionally ready to handle another confrontation with the redhead, whether it be her scolding of him or her forgiveness. Ben stood up, using the hand on his knee for leverage.

The three of them huddled together and Bill opened to the first page. Richie's head lolled back against the rim of the tub, trying to calm himself down as their unofficial leader began to read aloud.

“...And t-then a f-flood of memories over-t-took him: the phonec-call, the reunion, t-the -,” Bill paused, his voice caught in his throat. It was the same line Richie had checked out at. He looked up to see Ben and Bev glance gravely at each other, clearly reading along and catching where the line would head. Bill took a deep breath and shakily continued, “... the c-c-c-clown, the sewers, his own f-f-fucking d-death.”

“Shit,” Ben whispered.

“Rich, honey, where did you find this?” Bev asked quietly.

“It was... it was in his suitcase.”

“G-guys... I think we need to call M-Mike.”

When Mike had first called Richie about It’s return (*Richie? It’s Mike from Derry*) he couldn’t remember exactly what he had felt. Probably confusion and concern and fear, obviously fear, but he couldn’t remember every single feeling that had flown through him like a freight train. Richie was an emotional guy, he couldn’t be expected to file away everything he felt on a normal day, let alone one like that. What he could remember though, was that he wasn’t at all appreciative.

However, as he listened in on Bill telling Mike over speakerphone that he needed to “come down to the Townhouse” because there was “a situation,” Richie realized just how much appreciation Mike deserved. He had stuck around in this absolute hellhole, hated by so many because of the color of his skin, hated just for living his life in an almost entirely white small town. He had stuck around, knowing the rest of them had gone off to live their lives and completely forgotten about him. He had stuck around, knowing that at any moment, Pennywise could return to finish him off. He stuck around because he just cared that much.

Mike, bless him, didn’t even hesitate as he responded, voice tinny and crackling through the output.

“I’ll be there in twenty.”

Almost exactly twenty minutes later, Mike Hanlon rolled up, in all his glory (because of course Mike got hot too – honestly, was Richie the only one that didn't age like fine fucking wine?) with a determined look on his face. In his right hand, he held a tomahawk (which may very well have been the one he'd killed Henry with, Richie sickly realized).

"What happened? Is everyone okay?" Mike asked immediately.

"I was fine until you got here – what are you, Jason fucking Momoa?" He wriggled his eyebrows as he spoke, forcing down the hurt and mistrust from earlier with comedy. Mike's amused chuckle evaporated into a look of concern as he took in Richie's red, puffy eyes.

"Rich-."

"Mike! T-there you are!" Bill interrupted, hurrying over to greet the newcomer. "W-What's with the ax?" Mike's expression turned sheepish.

"... I thought you guys were in danger?"

"Well I'll be," Richie said in his Southern Belle Voice, fanning himself. "You came all this way for lil ol' me?"

"Fuck off," Mike smiled, and Richie let out an internal sigh of relief at the return to normalcy. Or, at least, the closest thing he could get to normalcy when he'd lost his two favorite people to a murder clown, fought said murder clown on two separate occasions, and, oh yeah, found a book with his dead crush's resurrection written in the pages. It was like the cherry on top of a trauma sundae. "... but seriously, what's going on?"

Notes for the Chapter:

chapter warnings: references to death, alcohol use, vomit, arguments, references to racism

richie drags everyone to go see aquaman on three separate occasions bc he's a thirsty bitch. a little while later, rich gets the chance to meet him at a red

carpet type deal and was a blubbering mess. like, "hi um it's so nice to um meet you man like wow you're so talented" and eddie is all "yeah yeah, whatever. can we go now?" and richie is star-struck until they get to their seats when eddie leans over and whispers some jealousy-invoked ""intentions"" in his ear. richie is antsy af for the rest of the ceremony. thank you for coming to my ted talk. (yes, i'm aware aquaman came out two years after chapter two takes place but have you SEEN jason momoa throwing axes???)